



State of Connecticut

Volume 2, Issue 3

Winter, 2001

Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

*Committed to coordinating and providing access to resources...
for the advancement of the Latino & Puerto Rican communities*

Message from the Executive Director, Fernando Betancourt



Dear Friends,

In the Fall issue of this newsletter, I informed you that we would be recruiting for a Public Information Officer in the very near future. It gives me great pleasure to notify you

that we have begun the process of hiring for this position and should have someone selected out of the many candidates that applied by April. It has been a very exciting few months for the Commission. We elected a new slate of officers to head the agency, held the much-anticipated Leadership Summit in De-

cember and started planning for a series of diversity forums to be held on March 29, June 26, and September 20, 2001.

I was overwhelmed with the outstanding response we had to the Latino Leadership Summit which was held on Friday, December 8, 2000 at the Farmington Marriott. We had over 400 people in attendance and were able to accomplish many of our goals with the conference. At the five workshops held: health, education, civic capacity, economic development and youth - we were able to obtain commitment from participants to leave the workshops with a plan of action in an area

of interest to them. The outcomes will be reported back at the next Summit which is in the planning stages for the year 2002. It was a very powerful and emotional day for me for the caliber of the people present and the cooperation among so many very talented Latinos and Puerto Ricans from throughout the state who participated willingly, despite the snow we got that morning.

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC), at its last meeting of the year held on Wednesday, December 20, 2000 elected a new slate of officers as follows: Maritza Tirú,

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State Boards and Commissions Forum

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission in conjunction with the African American Affairs Commission, the National Conference for Community and Justice, Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and DemocracyWorks will hold a special forum on Diversity on State Boards and Commissions on Tuesday, June 26, 2001 from 4:00 p.m. through 6:30 p.m. in the Governor's Southwest Office in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Keynote speakers include Maritza Tirú, Chairperson of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission and Rosa Correa of the Governor's Southwest Office. If you are interested in serving on

a State Board or Commission, please come to our forum to obtain information on the process for appointment. To RSVP, please call 240-8330 and ask for Werner Oyanadel or Lucy G.-Hernández. Joyce Hamilton,

Program Director for DemocracyWorks will greet the guests and do the introductions. Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission will deliver the concluding comments.

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www.cga.state.ct.us/lprac

NEWSLETTER

LPRAC COMMISSIONERS

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Legislative Analyst

Tersee Flores
Legislative Secretary

Ada González
University Intern-UCONN

Vacant
*Public Information
Officer*

Message from Chairperson Maritza Tirú



The Commission held its last meeting of the year 2000 on Wednesday, December 20th. At that meeting, we held our annual elections and selected the new slate of officers that will head the organization for the upcoming year. I am proud to report that I was elected the Commission's new Chairperson at that meeting. My name is Maritza Tirú and I hail from the City of Waterbury. I work at Naugatuck Valley Community College and am very committed to the mission of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. I am one of the original members of the Commission from when it was first organized in 1995. It will be an honor for me to assist in the advancement of our mission of providing access to the Latino and Puerto Rican communities throughout the State and in recognizing the accomplishments of our leaders from throughout Connecticut. It gives me great pleasure to inform you of the activities of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission during the past couple of months.

I am fortunate to have the following members of the Commission agreeing to serve on the Executive Board; they are: Dr. Julián Nieves, III, Vice Chairperson, Ms. Ivette Servera, Treasurer and Ms. Elena de Murias, Secretary. We are also delighted to continue to work with Commissioners Ramón Arroyo, Manuel García, Efraín Rosado, Ramón Serbia, Raúl Rodríguez and Carlos Vázquez.

We plan to activate the committees of the commission in order to continue the work started last year. For example, the Affirmative Action and Talent Bank Committee will work to prepare a mechanism by which we can make recommendations to the appointing authorities for the filling of vacancies on State Boards and Commission. In addition, the Legislation and Priorities Committee is working with the Executive Director and the Legislative Analyst in order to present legislative bills to benefit our communities in the areas of education, health, campaign finance reform and housing. The Special Projects Committee will soon meet in order to begin the preparations for the 2001 Gala Awards Banquet to be held on Saturday, September 29, 2001 at the Waterbury Sheraton.

The Executive Committee has been meeting monthly and will continue to do so in order to provide guidance with regards to the hiring of a new Public Information Officer, the ongoing diversity conferences, legislative bills before the legislature and further development of collaborations among other state and community agencies.

I look forward to increased innovation and technological advances by the Commission during my watch. Thank you for your support and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at our functions throughout the year.

Cordially,

Maritza Tirú, Chairperson

COMMITTEES AND MEETING DATES

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/TALENT BANK - LAST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH - 5:00

BUDGET COMMITTEE - SECOND MONDAY OF THE MONTH - 4:00

PRIORITIES AND LEGISLATION - SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH - 5:30

PERSONNEL AND PROCEDURES - THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH - 5:30

SPECIAL PROJECTS - THIRD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH - 5:00

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED

A Portrait of Gil Martínez

By Lucy Goicoechea-Hernández

Gil was the Communications Director and one of the original founders of the Aetna Hispanic Network--still an active employee network today. He is one of the original founders of The Hispanic/Latino Network at the Hartford where he also served as Director of Communications and Chairperson for their National Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration Committee in 1998 and 1999.

After 15 years in the insurance industry, he accepted the position of Community Liaison for Co-Opportunity, Inc., a community-based non-profit organization in Hartford. He is responsible for marketing, recruitment, job development/placement and the Alumni Association for YouthBuild Hartford and the Manufacturing Technology Training Program. These programs are designed to assist Hartford residents and welfare recipients achieve self-sufficiency through vo-

ational and life skills training.

He has just been appointed as a Manager for Inclusion and Diversity at The Hartford's Affinity and Personal Lines Division in Southington, Connecticut. He has also been named to the Board of the Community Economic Development Fund where he is one of only two Hispanics serving on that particular Board.

Gil is President of the Hispanic Professional Network (HPN) where he serves as editor for the HPN Newsletter and administrator for the HPN Web site (www.hpn-ct.org). HPN has become the central point of electronic communication for Hispanic professionals and organizations in the state of Connecticut.

Gil recently chaired HPN's 1st Annual Awards Gala and National Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. It was a great success thanks to his vision and the help of

the Connecticut Puerto Rican Forum, Inc., an array of sponsors and The HPN National Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration Committee. The event which took place on September 15, 2000 featured Humberto Ramirez' Latin Jazz Ensemble and Papo Lucca Y La Sonora Ponceña from Puerto Rico.

Gil is an avid photographer, volunteer producer for Hartford Public Access Television and promoter of many Latino and Puerto Rican artists and cultural events in our region. He is a member of the board of directors for the Connecticut Puerto Rican Forum, Inc., ACCESS Hartford and the Greater Hartford Arts Council. He is also a member of the The Latino Leadership Development Network, The Puerto Rican Family Monument Committee and Leadership Greater Hartford's Class of 2001. He currently resides in Hartford with his wife Marisol and 2 sons Gil, Jr. and Giovanni.

Gil is President of the Hispanic Professional Network (HPN) where he serves as editor for the HPN Newsletter and administrator for the HPN Web site (www.hpn-ct.org).

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The **Connecticut Association for United Spanish Action (CAUSA)**, is looking for an **Assistant Director/Grant Writer** responsible for managing the daily activities of the office and assisting in the identification of grant funding to support the agency's mission.

To apply, please e-mail your resume and cover letter to csierra2001@yahoo.com or mail to: Connecticut Association for United Spanish Action, 555 Windsor Street, Hartford, CT 06120 attention: Carmen Sierra, Director.

The **Town of West Hartford** is searching for a **Financial Systems Analyst 1** to ensure the availability, accuracy and timely distribution of financial information through maintenance of financial systems. The salary range is \$48,750-\$60,450.

Applications are available in the Employee Services Department, 50 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107, Room 414, (860) 523-3220. Applications are accepted till sufficient are on file for review.

The **New Britain Civil Service Commission** is looking for a **Superintendent - Water Quality** responsible for advanced technical work in supervising water treatment, pumping and quality functions of the water utility. The salary range is \$1,118.11-\$1,438.65 per week in 8 steps.

Applications must be received May 4, 2001 at Civil Service Commission, Room 409, City Hall, 27 West Main Street, New Britain, CT 06051. Telephone number 860-826-3404.

The LPRAC maintains a list of career opportunities in our reception area. Please contact Tersee Flores for further information at: (860) 240-8330.

Legislative News

By Werner Oyanadel, Legislative Analyst

The 2001 Legislative Session began on Wednesday, January 3, 2001. The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission is currently working on several issues dealing with the passage of those proposals highlighted on its 2001 Legislative Agenda. The following bills are just a few of those proposals that the Commission is actively focusing on. A full report will follow shortly after the end of the 2001 session or through our Legislative alert e-mails.

Asthma Tracking

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission is currently working with the Commissioner of Public Health and the Public Health Committee on issues dealing with Asthma. The Public Health committee is considering the adoption of legislative proposals dealing with the establishment of an Asthma Tracking System within our public schools. The intent is to create a health assessment of pupils enrolled in public school to determine if the pupil is suffering from any physical disability tending to prevent them from receiving the full benefit of schoolwork. If the proposals were adopted, it would require that the Commissioner of Public Health establish a system of monitoring asthma, including the preparation of surveys of asthma in schools and reports of asthma visits.

Our state commission's specific recommendation is for the Public Health Committee to include a method to track age, gender, and ethnic subgroups. We believe that it is very important for the state to obtain this information in order to know if current asthma strategies are effective or not when dealing with our community. Currently, the only state office that would have tracked this information - the Office of Multicultural Health Services under the State Department of Public Health - is targeted for elimination. In its first report titled, "*Multicultural Health: The Health Status of Minority Groups in Connecticut*" the office reported that an "image" of disparities in social and health issues for Connecticut's four racial and ethnic minority groups in Connecticut exists. Moreover, it highlighted a lack of uniformity at the state level to collect critical health statistics dealing with ethnicity and race.

We are happy to report that the Public Health Committee has approved our recommenda-

tions, which are pending approval from both houses of the General Assembly. The LPRAC will continue to advocate for this bill and we will ask the Public Health Committee to reconsider our recommendations to fund and implement a program called Asthma Control Education Program (A.C.E.) and to replicate this program or programs such as ACE at the state level.

Court Interpreters

The LPRAC in conjunction with the Hispanic Bar Association are currently working with the chairs of the Appropriations Committee to address the Judicial Department's inadequate number of court interpreters. We are focusing on two specific fronts: Quality through Certification and the restoration of interpreters to a total of 30 full-time interpreters.

Our estimates indicate that it will cost the state a total of \$57,185 in the year 2001 for the Judicial Department to join the National Center For State Court Interpreter Consortium. In 2002 and successive years, the cost will be \$12,290. The cost of restoring 30 full-time interpreters from the current 22, and increase of 8 interpreters, would cost \$360,000.

Earned Income Credit

We are advocating for the passage of SB 1338, "*An Act Creating an Earned Income Credit Against the Personal Income Tax.*" It is our state commission's belief that the adoption of this state policy would in effect assist our most needed tax paying citizens to have a more reasonable chance in overcoming the ill effects of poverty.

According to a special report prepared by The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1968 to reduce poverty and discrimination, and improve life opportunities for Hispanic Americans, "The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is today the most effective and efficient 'anti-poverty program' for Hispanic Americans."

We cannot afford to continue to report in the 21st century that the State of Connecticut's

largest minority group continues to face issues of poverty, lower educational attainment, lack of employment opportunities, homelessness, drug or alcohol abuse, and mental illness. Policy makers must support policy strategies such as the creation of the EITC to lift this large segment of the population out of poverty.

A tremendous opportunity exists for our state to adopt this legislative proposal. A refundable EITC would provide an important income supplement for the working poor, and in effect help create a healthier economy for our state. The growing interdependence within our cities, and the expected need for skilled labor needed to make our cities competitive again, supports the promotion of tax strategies that assist our low-income working families as a sound investment in our state's future.

List of Bills Actively Supported by the LPRAC

Bilingual Education Reform

Teacher Shortage

Immigrant Exploitation

Prison Overcrowding

Hispanic Economic Development Council

Power Plant Clean Air Reform
"Filthy Five"

Early Childhood Equitable Wages

Voting Rights Restoration

Casa Otoñal

New Haven, Connecticut
Will be holding their
25th Anniversary Celebration
On
Thursday, June 14, 2001
Beginning at 5:00 p.m.
at the
Anthony's Oceanview Restaurant

If you wish to advertise in the
Program Book or Purchase
Tickets - Please contact them at
203-773-1847

by May 11, 2001

Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission Receives Website Recognition Award



This prestigious academic excellence award was presented to LPRAC's website by the researchers at Lightspan StudyWeb®, one of the internet's premier sites for educational resources for students and teachers. Check out our award winning site at: <http://www.cga.state.ct.us/lprac>.

Latino History Corner

Julia de Burgos (1914--1953) Born in Carolina on February 17, she is one of Puerto Rico's leading 20th-century poets, influenced by Pablo Neruda. She was a prominent member of the literary Vanguard movement in San Juan in the late 1930s. Her literary work placed her among the greatest poets of Hispanic America. She died in New York City on July 6.

Sister M. Isolina Ferre - Known as the Mother Teresa of Puerto Rico, this Missionary Servant of the Most Blessed Trinity received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1999.

Colonel Dora Hernández -- Colonel Hernández was born on November 29, 1937 in San Antonio, Texas. She attended Brook School of Aerospace Medicine, Brooks Air Force Base where she received her flight nurse wings in 1968. Her military awards include: the Air Force Commendation Medal; Air Force Meritorious Service Medal; Air Force Achievement Medal; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award; Combat Readiness Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon with three oak leaf clusters; Armed Forces Reserve Medal; Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross; Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal; and Air Force Training Ribbon.



The Puerto Rican Family Monument



Dr. Julian Nieves, III
New Vice Chairperson



Ivette Servera
New Treasurer



Elena de Murias
Secretary

Latino Leadership Summit

by Lucy Goicoechea-Hernández
Special Projects Director

"We Have Seen the Power, and The Power is Us!"

"We Have Seen the Power, and the Power is Us!", this was the chant of pride at the Capacity Building Workshop I attended that spilled over into the full crowd when each workshop re-convened in the afternoon to hear the summit's scheduled speakers. The workshop was flawlessly facilitated by Marilda Gandara, President and CEO of the Aetna Foundation.

The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission co-sponsored the first Latino Leadership Summit in collaboration with the Latino Leadership Network and Leadership Greater Hartford on Friday, December 8, 2000. The summit was a huge success and we received coverage from a number of statewide publications including The Hartford Courant.

The summit included such noted national figures as Manuel Mirabal, President of the National Puerto Rican Coalition and Alberto Ibarguen, Publisher of the Miami Herald and former Hartford resident. There was also an overflow attendance from our Hispanic community statewide. There was participation from such community members as Ernie Márquez and Pete Rosa of the State University System, Madelyn Colón, Assistant State Treasurer, Anthony Amato, Hartford Superintendent of Schools, Marilda Gandara, Aetna Foundation, Joxel García, State Health Department, Edna Negrón, The Hartford, George Bahamonde, President and CEO of the United Way of the Capital Area, Rosa Correa, Director of the Southwest Office for Governor John G. Rowland, Eddie Pérez, President of SINA, Gil Martínez of the Hispanic Professional Network, Miguel Matos, Commissioner, Capital City Economic Development Authority and Richard Blumenthal, State Attorney General. The co-chairs for the summit were Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director of the Latino and Puerto Rican

Affairs Commission and Ernie Márquez of Central Connecticut State University.

The summit included five dynamic workshops that were overflowing with participants. These included topics such as Youth, Education, Capacity Building, Economic Development and Health issues. The facilitators for the five workshops included: Education - Herman Lujan, Chief Academic Officer, Connecticut State University; Health - Edna Berastáin, Assistant to the State Commissioner of Health; Economic Development, Ana Alfaro, Community Relations Representative, CL&P; Civic Involvement, Marilda Gandara; and, Youth Leadership, Ivette

Rivera-Dryer, Financial Aid Director, Manchester Community College. Every participant was challenged to take the lead as a result of their experience at the conference and come away with a game plan for action from workshop participation.

The overwhelming tone was that of unity and commitment to exercise the power it has, collectively discovered by the group that day. Everyone who participated left with a mandate to work on a particular project of choice and come back in two years with a report of what was accomplished on behalf of our communities. Everyone was highly energized and some very good work was started

in those conference rooms.

We had participation from at least 40 youth from area colleges and universities who are also planning a conference of their own. Towards the end of the day, they asked for help from the audience in organizing it. The consensus was to do a second summit; this time, with an emphasis on what we accomplished towards the goals we set at the first summit as well as adding an economic development component. We would be remiss if we did not thank the following sponsors for their tremendous generosity and support for the Leadership Summit: the **Aetna Foundation, Chase Manhattan Bank, The Hartford, United Technologies, Fleet Bank and People's Bank**.

Overall, it was a raging success and we hope to replicate and add to the success of the first at the second summit in the year 2002. Thank you for participating. The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs commissioners and staff look forward to meeting many of you at future events sponsored by our agency.



**State Attorney General
Richard Blumenthal**



**Miami Herald Publisher
Alberto Ibarguen**



Julio Colón at the Podium -
UCONN Student
Carlos Soler at Left - CCSU
Student



Award Recipients

Rita Rivera-Ortiz and Ted Carroll - Leadership Greater Hartford/ Latino Leadership Development Network Representatives

Presenter

Martita Rodríguez

Continued from page 1

Chairperson, Dr. Julián Nieves, III, Vice Chairperson, Ivette Servera, Treasurer and Elena de Murias, Secretary. We wish to thank the immediate past Chairman, Ramón Arroyo, immediate past Vice Chairperson, Ivette Servera and Commissioner Efraín Rosado, immediate past Treasurer for their support and service throughout the past year.

We also co-sponsored a legislative reception along with the Commission on Children, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the African American Affairs Commission on Wednesday, January 10, 2001. The objective of the reception was to introduce ourselves and our legislative agendas to the legislators and, hopefully, in this way pick up support for our various bills during the legislative session. The reception was well-attended by our commissioners and other state commissioners.

The legislative session has begun. There are a number of bills that we are sponsoring in the areas of housing, education, health, campaign finance reform and economic development. If you have expertise in any of these areas and would be willing to testify on behalf of our pieces of legislation please contact Werner Oyanadel at the LPRAC Office, 240-8330.

The Commission sponsored the first of 3 diversity workshops on March 29, 2001 at the Old Judiciary Room of the State Capitol in order to familiarize our communities with the process for appointment onto State Boards and Commissions. A

press conference was held on Wednesday, March 28th at 11:00 a.m. in Room 1B of the Legislative Office Building to kick off the forum. It was well-attended by both the press and the public.

Finally, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission was approached by Southern Connecticut State University to sponsor an evening presentation of the "Simpson Street" play written by Edwardo



Werner Oyanadel and Lucy Goicoechea-Hernández of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs (LPRAC) Commission, Américo Santiago, LPRAC Commissioner, Bessy Reyna, John Bairos, Moraima Gutierrez and other Leadership Summit 2000 attendees.

Gallardo and performed by Puerto Rican artist Myriam Colón. We mailed out notices to our database informing the community of the performance and our sponsorship for the evening of December 15, 2000. The University recognized our participation by mentioning our sponsorship in their performance program book.

We have worked towards the improvement of our website to provide a more interactive, state of the art site that will offer news on the latest activities of the agency

and links to other Hispanic websites useful to our constituents. As a result, we won an academic excellence award from Lightspan's Studyweb®. See the full story on page 5 of this newsletter. We also plan to link the talent bank more fully with the website so that it will be easier for our users to join the bank ensuring security of the information placed there. The talent bank has also taken off recently. We are

receiving constant requests for the form to join via e-mail, the regular mail and telephone calls to the agency. Keep those calls coming.

In conclusion, **I would like to welcome aboard Ms. Ada González, an economics major at the University of Connecticut, who will be with us as an intern during the legislative session.** The annual report has been printed and will be distributed during the month of April. Feel free to stop by the office if you would like a copy. We look forward to shaking your hand at the many events we have planned throughout the coming year

and appreciate your support for our activities. We would especially love your support and participation during the current legislative session with the bills we have before the legislature. Wishing you continued success and I look forward to mailing out our next issue.

Cordially,

Fernando Betancourt

***Median Income for Hispanics Grows Quicker than for Other Groups**

According to Census calculations, minority groups made significant gains in their quest for equal pay, especially Hispanics. In 1995, the Median Household Income for Hispanic households was \$ 24,990 (in 1999 dollars adjusted for inflation). In 1999, the Median Household Income for Hispanics stood at \$30,735, a 23% gain in income for the period. Other groups also experienced gains in Household Income, but the gains were not as dramatic as they were for Hispanics. Asians continue to be the minority group with the highest Median Household Income in the U.S. The gain in income experienced by Asians was the only one that outpaced Hispanics in terms of number of dollars, but in terms of percent of growth, Hispanics outpaced Asians.

Top 5 states in terms of Hispanic owned businesses are:*

1. California
2. Texas
3. Florida
4. New York
5. New Jersey

**Courtesy of hispanictrends.com.*



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FORUM ON DIVERSITY - STATE BOARDS

June 26, 2001 - 4:00 - 6:30 PM

A FORUM ON THE NEED FOR DIVERSITY ON STATE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Governor's Southwest Office
Bridgeport, Connecticut

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL: (860) 240-8330

SPEAKERS

Rosa Correa - Director - Governor's Southwest Office
Maritza Tirú - Chairperson - Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs
Fernando Betancourt - Executive Director - LPRAC

THE LATINO & PUERTO RICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION TOASTMASTERS CLUB

Invites you to attend our regular monthly
meetings held
at the Legislative Office Building
Hartford, Connecticut
Conference Room 1-A

6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Meets every second and fourth Tuesday of the month.

A special thank you to Gil Martínez for the photographs used throughout this newsletter; Werner Oyanadel for his technical assistance and Fernando Betancourt for co-editing.

LPRAC's newsletter is published quarterly. Comments and questions may be sent to: Lucy G.-Hernández
18-20 Trinity Street, Hartford, CT 06106 or e-mail lucy.hernandez@po.state.ct.us